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BALLOT PREPARATION

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A GUIDE TO BALLOT PREPARATION

BALLOT PREPARATIONS

The following are some of the requirements for ballot preparation contained in the Massachusetts General Laws. For local elections, certain provisions are subject to determination by local charters or practice. When this local determination is allowed, it is stated in the section below.

COLOR AND SIZE OF PAPER BALLOTS

- White except for primaries
- **Primaries** - each party different color
- **Absentee ballots** - color of paper different from official or specimen and, for primaries, similar to color of each party's official ballot
- Folded to measure- from 4 1/2" to 5" wide by 6" to 13 1/2" long
- **Specimen ballots** - on colored paper

TYPE

- Black ink, one column within each fold
- Names in capital letters 1/8 to 1/4 inches high, except surnames and political designations of candidates for President and Vice-president and names of candidates for U.S. Senator at least 3/16 inches high. There are no typesize requirements for the address.

INFORMATION AND DIRECTIONS

The following must appear in the ballot:

- That it is an official ballot, or official absentee ballot, kind of election, party if primary, city or town, precincts, (if the content of the ballot differs within the city or town) date of election, facsimile signature of preparing official (except on specimen ballots)
- Paper ballots - space for x at right of each name, group, and question
- Labels for machines and electronic systems - similar provisions for voters to indicate choices
- Directions to help voter including the number voter may vote for; if more than one, instruction shall be "Vote for not more than____ "
- Absentee voting instructions provided and, except for punchcards, printed on absentee ballot

ARRANGEMENTS OF OFFICES AND QUESTIONS

Place offices on ballot as follows:

STATE ELECTIONS

- Electors of President and Vice-president,
- U.S. Senator,
- Govenor and Lieutenant Governor (as a team in general election),
- Attorney General,
- State Secretary,
- State Treasurer,
- State Auditor,
- Representative in Congress,
- Governor's Councillor,
- State Senator, and
- State Representative;

others in order determined by State Secretary.

Ballot questions in order determined by State Secretary, except questions under Article 48 of the Amendments to the Constitution come first.

- **Voting machine labels:** space of at least an inch between U.S. Senator and Governor
- **Paper:** 1st column - Electors and U.S. Senator in presidential year; U.S. Senator and Governor and Lt. Governor gubernatorial year
- **Electronic Voting System** : 1st page - Electors and U.S. Senator in presidential year; U.S. Senator and Governor and Lt. Governor in gubernatorial year.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

- presidential candidates,
- state committee,
- ward or town committee

CITY ELECTION

no order specified, except that for an office with different lengths of terms, place in order of length of terms

- **Candidates from single wards to be voted for at large** arrange in groups by wards

NAMES AND ADDRESSES

Candidates' names as registered and addresses except as follows:

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

president and vice-president as a team use surnames only, no addresses; electors' names not listed; title of office is "Electors of president and vice-president"

STATE ELECTIONS

Candidates for governor and Lt. governor as a team use only surnames, no addresses (unless two such candidates have the same surname).

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

- **presidential candidates**

full name, no address

- **Ward/town committee candidates**

names and addresses; name of city or town does not appear

CITY ELECTIONS

Alderman at large

address shall include number of ward in which candidate lives

ORDER OF NAMES

- No name on ballot more than once for the same office or for both a full term and partial term for the same office
- Names in ALPHABETICAL order except as below (see Incumbents, Party Nominees, and Lot)

INCUMBENTS

- **Presidential primary**

Elected and appointed state committee members before other candidates

- **State general election**

Elected incumbents first except for president (including governor, even if Lt. governor is not incumbent)

- **Town primary and election**

elected incumbents first, unless charter states differently

- **City primary and election**

elected incumbents and those appointed by local legislative body or that body plus school committee come first, unless charter says differently.

PARTY NOMINEES

Political party nominees, except for president, precede other candidates in partisan general election, except incumbent (as directed above) comes first and except where position is determined by lot.

LOT

Positions usually determined by lot in local preliminaries, if charter so provides; in other local elections, only if charter so provides; in presidential primary, candidates for president and slates for ward/ town committees.

EIGHT WORD STATEMENT & THREE WORD STATEMENT

NOTE: Eight-word statements appear only on primary or preliminary ballots. Party designations or three-word statements of political designation appear on partisan general election ballots.

PRIMARY AND PRELIMINARY

The eight-word statement from the nomination paper is placed on ballot for both state and local primaries and preliminaries, unless local charter provides otherwise for local elections.

Public offices held currently or formerly may, if candidate wishes, be listed. Not every government employee holds a "public office". Holders of public offices must have entrusted to them in some degree the exercise of the power and authority of government. The duties must not be merely clerical, but must involve the exercise of some significant discretion or judgment. The position must not be merely advisory, or a political party position.

"Candidate for renomination" (or "candidate for re-election" for state committee) and "veteran" may be included in the eight-word statement if applicable.

ALL GENERAL ELECTIONS

"Candidate for re-election" shall be added for any elected incumbent, except for governor, Lt. governor, and electors of president and vice-president. An incumbent chosen in any other way than by the voters in an election is not considered an "elected" incumbent. A candidate for election to the same office in a precinct, ward, or district which contains any portion of the territory which he was elected to represent at the last preceding municipal election for that office is considered an elected incumbent. A district alderman, councilor or school committee person seeking election as an at-large alderman, councilor or school committee member **is not** considered an elected incumbent.

PARTISAN GENERAL ELECTIONS - LOCAL AND STATE

The words "Democratic", "Republican" or "Independent Voters Party" shall be used for those parties' nominees. An independent or minor party candidate may place a statement of party or political designation of up to three words on nomination papers which shall be placed on the ballot. The words "Democratic", "Republican" or "Independent Voters " cannot be used. If no statement appears, the word "Unenrolled" shall be used on state and city ballots (no word shall be added for town election if none is on nomination paper). Party caucus nominees have the name of their party on town election ballots.

If candidate is nominated by two parties, names of both parties may appear in order chosen by candidate, or by clerk or state secretary if nomination is accepted and candidate does not choose order by deadline (for all elections following primaries, 13 days after regular state primary, 6 days after special primary; for all other elections, within 72 hours after the last time for filing nomination papers or certificates of nomination.)

NONPARTISAN GENERAL ELECTIONS

No statement except "caucus nominee" for candidate chosen by town's citizens' caucus (and "candidate for re-election" if applicable).

BLANK SPACES FOR WRITE-INS

Blank spaces for write-ins shall be provided as follows:

Paper and Optech

spaces equal to the number to be elected shall be provided, after the names of candidates.

Punch cards

envelope provided with write-in spaces.

Lever

the same opportunity for write-ins shall be provided as for paper ballots.

EXCEPTIONS

State primaries and presidential primary, except for president - spaces provided only if fewer names are listed than the number to be elected and then up to that number.

Presidential primary
for president, one write-in space following "no preference" line.

Presidential election
write-in space for president/ vice-president team for whom electors' names have been filed with state secretary.

City primary or preliminary
local charter provisions govern.

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

FOR ORDER OF NAMES
AND STATEMENTS ON BALLOT FOR EACH KIND OF ELECTION

STATE PRIMARIES
Order
- Elected and appointed incumbents first, if any
- Otherwise alphabetical

Statements
- Eight-word statement allowed may include public offices currently or formerly held; must state that it was former if that is the case.
- Words "candidate for renomination" may be used as part of the statement. Word "veteran" may be used, if applicable, as part of the statement. (M.G.L. 31 § 1)

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY
Order
- Presidential candidates - order determined by lot
- State committee candidates - elected and appointed members first, otherwise alphabetical. Ward/town committee slates (three or more candidates considered a slate) - order of slates determined by lot
- Ward/town committee individual candidates alphabetical, following slates.

Statements
State committee candidates only same as for state primary, except that "candidate for re-election" rather than renomination may be used if appropriate.

STATE ELECTION

Order

• Elected incumbents first, including governor-lieutenant governor even if lieutenant governor is not incumbent (except for electors of president and vice-president)
• Political party nominees next, alphabetically by candidates' surnames (except for electors of president and vice-president)
• Otherwise alphabetical

Statements

"Candidate for re-election" shall be used for elected incumbents, except governor-lieutenant governor and presidential electors.

Statement, in up to three words, of party or political designation shall be used as follows: the words "Democratic", "Republican" , or "Independent Voters" shall be used for those parties' nominees.

For unenrolled candidates, the words "Democratic", "Republican", "Independent Voters Party" cannot be used. If no statement is on the nomination papers, the word "Unenrolled" shall be used on the ballot.

If candidate was nominated by two parties, names of both parties may appear in order chosen by candidate, or by state secretary if nomination is accepted and candidate does not choose order by 13 days after primary.

CITY PRIMARY

Order

•Elected incumbents and those appointed by local legislative body or that body plus school committee first, unless charter states differently.
•Otherwise alphabetical, unless charter states differently

Statements

Eight-word statement as in state primary, unless charter states differently.

CITY PRELIMINARY

Order

Determined by lot, unless charter provides differently

Statements

Eight-word statement as in state primary, unless charter provides differently

CITY ELECTION

Order

•Elected incumbents and those appointed by local legislative body or that body plus school committee come first, unless charter states differently.
•If election follows party primaries, party nominees come next alphabetically by surnames of candidates.
•Otherwise alphabetical, unless charter states differently.

Statements

"Candidate for re-election" which shall be used for elected incumbents, is the only statement allowed, unless election follows party primaries.

If election follows party primaries, same as state primaries except that if candidate was nominated by two parties and accepts nominations, clerk determines order if candidate does not choose order by 6 days after primary.

TOWN PRIMARY

Order

•Elected incumbents first, unless charter states differently
•Other alphabetical, unless charter states differently

Statements

Eight-word statement as in state primary, unless charter provides differently

TOWN PRELIMINARY

Order

• Elected incumbents first, unless charter provides otherwise. If election follows party primaries, party nominees come next alphabetically by candidates' surnames
• If election follows caucus or caucuses, local charter or tradition determines whether caucus nominees precede other candidates, if any. But the general law seems to indicate that party caucus nominees are placed before other candidates, except elected incumbents, unless charter provides differently.
• Otherwise alphabetical, unless charter provides differently.

Statements

"Candidate for re-election" shall be used for any elected incumbent.

If election follows party primaries, statement of party or political designation, in up to three words, shall be used. The words "Democratic", "Republican" or "Independent Voters Party" shall be used for those parties' nominees. For independent or minor party candidates, the words "Democratic", "Republican" or "Independent Voters Party" may not be used. If no statement is placed on nomination papers, the word "Unenrolled" shall appear (except at town elections or city elections not following primaries). If candidate was nominated by two parties, names of both parties may appear in order chosen by candidate, or by clerk if the nominaton is accepted and candidate does not choose order by 6 days after primary.

If election follows party caucus, name of party shall be added.

If election follows nonpartisan caucus, "caucus nominee" shall be added.